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Edited by ARTHUR DEERIN CALL

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It being impracticable to express in these columns the divergent views of the thousands of members of the American Peace Society, full responsibility for the utterances of this magazine is assumed by the Editor.

THE CONFERENCE INVITATIONS

THERE is a sober note in the formal invitations to the disarmament conference sent by our government to Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and China. "It is, however, quite clear," the State Department says in the notes, "that there can be no final assurance of the peace of the world in the absence of the desire for peace, and the prospect of reducing armaments is not a hopeful one unless this desire finds expression in a practical effort to remove the cause of misunderstanding and to seek ground for agreement as to the principles and their application." The Department was wise in stressing this fact. It is an obvious fact, but often obvious facts are overlooked, or are not given sufficient weight. And this particular obvious fact is so fundamental to the success of this conference that it must not be overlooked for one second by any of the representatives of the peoples concerned, or by any of the millions of men and women who contribute to that world public opinion which can be so potent next November. There is every reason to believe that there is a compelling "desire for peace." It is manifest in all directions. We believe it will be powerful and effective when the conference gathers. But nothing should be taken for granted. The words used in the State Department's invitation should be at once a warning and a stimulus to the peace-seeking masses throughout the world.

It is a noteworthy fact that as much emphasis is placed in the invitations upon the necessity of disarmament and peace for economic reason as for moral and humanitarian reasons. This may not be an altogether pleasing phase of the invitations to many of those who have labored idealistically for peace these many years. But, in truth, they should feel a certain comfort in this. It is the tribute being given them today by the more materialistic of mankind. The latter have found, in the conditions of the world today, overwhelming proof not only that the theories of the peace-seekers were beautiful, but that they were utterly and completely sound. The rising cry from every great people for relief from the destroying burden of present-day war costs, reflected in the State Department's invitation, is a tribute to the far-seeing wisdom of the idealists. And, as a practical matter, in this workaday world, men seeking peace will not be concerned with the motives of any of those helping to the attainment of the goal.

There is pleasure in noting that the State Department, voicing President Harding's viewpoint, takes the flat position that great armaments do not insure, but rather endanger, peace. "Avoidable or extravagant expense of this nature is not only without economic justification," says the Department, "but is a constant menace to the peace of the world rather than an assurance of its preservation." Any who may have thought that President Harding was a mailed-fist advocate because of his Hampton Roads speech to the returning fleet, with its "by the eternals," must change their minds in the light of the words quoted from the disarmament invitations. If the President had the theory, at the time of his Hampton Roads speech, that many thought he entertained, which is doubtful, he has abandoned it, after several months' contemplation of world affairs from the vantage ground of the White House.

It appears from the invitations that the question of reducing naval armaments will have the primary place in the deliberations of the conference. That seems sensible, since naval armaments present the easiest point of attack, and if success may be had there, the conference will not have been in vain, though all else fail. Apparently it is the thought of our government that the conference will pass easily and probably almost imperceptibly from naval armaments to land armaments, and from that point on to the treatment of the infinitely difficult and vexatious question of international action, looking to the suppression of the new and inconceivably

horrible agents of destruction that were developed in the war, and that may be so easily mobilized by a faithless and aggressive nation. Involved in all of this, of course, will be the broad questions of Far Eastern and world policy.

Taken as a whole, the expression of opinion and purpose in the invitations was admirable and well calculated to advance the cause of peace, regarded lately with a new optimism by those in touch with international movements.

PROGRESS IN THE DISARMAMENT PRELIMINARIES

SECRETARY HUGHES has surmounted successfully the initial obstacles in the way of the disarmament conference called by President Harding. His early difficulties have been with the Japanese angle. The statesmen of Japan had no hesitancy in agreeing to a conference on disarmament, but they were chary of taking up Far Eastern and Pacific questions. However, they finally agreed to enter the conference whole-heartedly, and that is a fact of large importance. It seems to pre-empt the removal of smaller and related difficulties in the time between now and the conference—such, for example, as agreement upon the scope and nature of the Far Eastern problems to be included in the agenda.

Two tremendous forces are working in support of President Harding and Secretary Hughes in placing this conference on a sound foundation and in starting it in the right direction. One force, which is not always recognized, is that of the enlightened public opinion operating not merely in our own country and in England, but on the continent of Europe and in Japan itself. The liberal thought of the world is rallying to the support of this American movement toward sanity and righteousness and it is rapidly taking form and acquiring power. There is sense in the clause which appeared in Baron Shidehara's letter to A. B. Farquhar, of York, Pennsylvania. Baron Shidehara used these words: "There is no reason to doubt that our mutual intention of good-will must bear its proper fruit." In his letter to Mr. Farquhar that clause was linked with a warning against the activities of those seeking discord between America and Japan. But whatever qualifications the Japanese diplomat attached to them, they stand forth as an admirable expression of an enormously important truth in the purposes of the peoples concerned.

The second of the great forces forwarding the success of the disarmament conference is the familiar one of taxation. So much has been said and written about that, as an agency which is turning the so-called practical man into the paths advocated and followed by the

so-called idealists, that we hesitate to add anything. But there are, in another part of this number, figures not generally known which very powerfully express the crushing weight of this taxation burden caused by war and preparation for war. They show that in the fiscal year 1922 appropriations already made by this government to cover expenses incident to past wars, such as pensions, compensations, and other forms of relief, are 806 per cent more than such appropriations in the fiscal year 1916, the last before this country entered the World War. They also show that the appropriations for the army in the 1922 fiscal year have increased 214 per cent over the 1916 appropriations, and that the appropriations for the navy have increased 156 per cent. The total war appropriations thus far for the year 1922 average 430 per cent more than the total for the year 1916—the total, of course, covering all appropriations for war expenses, past, present, and future. And that is not all. Secretary Mellon a few days ago stated to the Ways and Means Committee that provision must be made in this fiscal year for expenditures of \$450,000,000 in the War Department, which is approximately \$100,000,000 more than appropriations for the year, and that the expenditures in the Navy Department will be about \$487,000,000, which is approximately \$60,000,000 more than the current appropriation. This increase in probable current expenditures over current appropriations is due apparently to the work started in each department in the past and not yet completed.

What this country is suffering and is protesting against is being suffered by every other of the great powers in worse degree. France, with less than half our population and wealth, is supporting an army nearly six times the size of ours, as lately fixed by Congress. Great Britain, according to some estimates, will spend upward of twice as much money on her navy this year as the United States, and possibly four or five times as much on her army as this country, and she is less wealthy today than we. Japan is so burdened by her army and navy appropriations that the business elements, the tax-paying elements, are going to the side of the liberal forces in great numbers, constantly causing increasing danger to the prestige of the militaristic elder statesmen.

With such a set of facts in the world, and with enough time having passed since the war for minds to clear and hatreds to dissolve, there is reason to suppose that the initial progress of Secretary Hughes will be followed by great achievement when the conference assembles. Not that dangers are not present. They are. If the problems were not serious and difficult, the conference would not be so necessary and so important. The actual problem of Japan, that of finding room for her expanding